

ALLOCHIRIAN HEROISM.

THERE are three kinds of heroism. The first and commonest kind is the heroism of instinct and impulse, which plunges straight to its goal, heedless of consequences and criticism. The second kind, finer and rarer, is the heroism which is heroic for its own private sake and gratification, and is at once too modest and too proud to challenge the world's admiration of its achievement. The third kind, true product of this hyper-civilized and cultured age, not satisfied with simply making itself invisible, goes a step farther, and, being a lion, dons as it were the ass' skin and imitates his bray : it is so magnanimous that, rather than receive the just reward of its self-sacrifice, it makes a supreme effort to make itself appear contemptible. A conspicuous example of this last-named superlative heroism has lately come under our notice ; and we are pleased to believe that we shall be the first to put the matter in its true light, and to rescue two benefactors of their species from the misconception which at present prevails respecting them.

Obersteiner of Vienna, has recently called attention to a sensory phenomenon which he has designated Allochiria (*ἄλλος-χείρ*). When this condition is present, the patient refers the sensation of pain, or other irritation of the cutaneous surface, to the opposite side of the body from that actually affected, and generally to a corresponding spot. Thus far the phenomenon in question has been observed only in chronic diseases of the nervous system. Some time since, however, a certain Mr. Elam, nominally editor of a Southern newspaper, but hereafter to be known as field-marshal of the noble army of scientific martyrs, undertook to carry the investigation a step farther. While debating how best to accomplish this, the idea seems to have occurred to him to remove, at the same time, the stigma hitherto attaching to vivisectionists, that they never vivisected themselves. His success in both directions, has been as complete as it deserved to be ; and yet, so ingenious was his method of procedure, that not one in a hundred thousand, probably, has thus far regarded him as a hero

at all, but only as a vulgar breaker of the laws of his State. Mr. Elam's co-operator in the experiment was another Virginian editor, whose name, we regret to say, has escaped us. These two gentlemen got up a pretended quarrel, only to be settled at the muzzle of the revolver. They thus threw the public completely off the scent of their true purpose. After having allowed themselves to be pursued by the authorities for what seemed a sufficient length of time, they met and proceeded to business. Each operator took up a perpendicular position fronting the other, the distance between them being eight paces ; the instruments employed being bullets from Colt's revolvers, thirty-one calibre. To quote the account given by the press : " After several discharges of the weapons Mr. Elam put his hand to his leg, ejaculating, ' Oh ! I am hit ! ' He was eagerly questioned as to which leg had been struck, and he was able to reply that he was under the distinct impression that the bullet had penetrated both organs of locomotion. Investigation revealed the fact, however, that but one limb had been pierced by the missile " ; and the triumphant success of the experiment was thus placed beyond doubt.

Mr. Elam, like Galileo and other eminent pioneers in science, was made the object of the ignorant and malignant abuse of the writers in the daily papers : but we have thought it right to raise the veil which his modesty would fain draw over his heroic sacrifice, and to place him forever on a pedestal where he may receive the honor and reverence that are his due. In palliation of our American barbarism in matters of scientific interest, we may here call attention to the fact that an at least equally illiberal spirit prevails in Paris, which has been regarded as the special stronghold of unimpassioned learning. The venerable Brown-Séquard, while in the act of inserting his lancet into the nervous system of a living monkey, was smitten on the nose by a sun-umbrella in the hands of an excitable and high-wrought young lady, Without boasting, we may claim a momentary precedence over our French friends. There was an absence of calculated scientific motive in the sun-umbrella ; but there is no gainsaying Mr. Elam's legs.